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UNITED STATES MILITARY PILOT AND MASTER SERGEANT
CHARGED WITH IMPORTING NARCOTICS
ON UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JOHN GILBRIDE, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration's New York Field Division, on behalf of the New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force, announced today that Captain FRANKLIN RODRIGUEZ and Master Sergeant JOHN FONG of the United States Air National Guard were arrested late yesterday on federal narcotics charges. According to the Complaint filed in Manhattan federal court today, RODRIGUEZ is a pilot of United States Air Force C-5A "Galaxy" cargo aircraft and FONG is a load master. The Complaint alleges that on or about April 8, 2005, RODRIGUEZ and FONG flew a United States Air Force C-5A aircraft from Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, New York, to Germany as part of an official mission to deliver training supplies to the Republic of

Georgia. After arriving in Germany, the crew, including RODRIGUEZ and FONG, flew to the Republic of Georgia and then returned to Germany. According to the Complaint, while they were in Germany, RODRIGUEZ and FONG went to a hotel room and loaded packages containing pills of 3, 4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine, commonly known as "MDMA" or "Ecstasy" into their personal luggage.

According to the Complaint, on or about April 12, 2005, RODRIGUEZ and FONG flew on the United States Air Force C-5A aircraft from Germany to Stewart Air National Guard Base. Shortly after they landed, federal law enforcement agents searched luggage that belonged to RODRIGUEZ and FONG and found 28 large bags believed to contain at least 290,000 pills of Ecstasy.

The Complaint charges RODRIGUEZ and FONG with one count of conspiracy to import Ecstasy into the United States and one count of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute Ecstasy.

If convicted of the charges, RODRIGUEZ and FONG face a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison on each count and a \$1,000,000 fine on each count.

Mr. KELLEY praised the efforts of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force, comprised of members of DEA, NYPD, FBI, IRS, ICE and NYSP. Mr. KELLEY thanked Brigadier General DANA DEMAND, New York Air National Guard. Mr. KELLEY also thanked the United States Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, for its assistance in the investigation.

Mr. KELLEY stated: "It is indeed unfortunate that while countless other members of the armed services are so selflessly risking and sacrificing their lives abroad in defense of their country, that these defendants chose to co-opt for their own personal gain needed defense resources to fill their own pockets and to poison our streets with dangerous drugs."

Mr. GILBRIDE stated: "Ecstasy is an extremely harmful drug that is abused mainly by teenagers and young adults. It is appalling that individuals, who volunteered to protect the citizens of the United States, turn around and betray the public trust by smuggling poison into the very community they were entrusted to protect."

Assistant United States Attorneys MARC MUKASEY and SCOTT L. MARRAH are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.